

# Crows and the Gunshot

*by Neil McCarthy*

*for Stephen Byrne*

Clear and clean of clutter, the room welcomed my wife like a red carpet to the door of a limousine on Oscar night. She strode in, graceful as spring sunlight gentle against the season's first crocus, elegant as a sheet playing matador with the wind, fragrant as a valley bursting with jasmine and fuchsia in the morning after the rain. I clicked "Like."

We sat for dinner, a careful offering of colour and quantity, a transitory beauty crafted in artistry and effort. The candle flickered when the plates were rested and the shadows that they cast aligned to point to wine, a Pinot that had travelled from the vines of Napa - one bottle she had saved for an evening such as this. I posted a picture online and 8 people clicked "Like."

With a fork like a Drum Major's baton, she spoke hungrily about what the world needs, about positive action, the mirage of educated voters; courage, equality, tolerance, passion; the necessity to stand up and be counted and not just be one of a billion sedentary onlookers for whom the planet is a hotel room in Vegas. I agreed and clicked "Share".

A gunshot may scatter the crows, she said, but when the crows come back we'll see that the gun is not the answer. We'll Thelma-and-Louise it, I urged, Bonnie-and-Clyde it, she bettered, Sundance-and-Butch it, I proffered but she was already leaning in for a kiss. And in the room's auburn glow, with a satisfied stomach and a heart full of fire,

I exchanged my wife for a meme.

